

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A low color or colorless polymaleate as determined by a Gardner color number of 8 or less, said polymaleate is prepared by aqueous solution polymerization comprising 70 to 100 weight percent, based on the total weight of monomer, of maleic acid; and 0.5 to 50  $\mu\text{m}$ , based on the moles of monomer, of a polyvalent transition metal ion selected from group consisting of Group IVA, VA, VIA, VIIA, VIIIA, IB, IIB, and combinations thereof; provided that 40 to 55 mole percent of the carboxylic acid groups on the maleic acid are neutralized prior to polymerization.

2. The polymaleate according to Claim 1 wherein 45 to 50 mole percent of the carboxylic acid groups on the maleic acid are neutralized prior to polymerization.